



Department of Justice

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ANOTHER SENTENCED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD CHARGES

BATON ROUGE, LA – Another Louisiana resident was sentenced in federal court yesterday on fraud charges related to a hurricane disaster relief program, United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced.

DONALD R. NELSON, age 31, of Port Allen, Louisiana, pled guilty on July 24, 2007, to Count One of an indictment charging him with making a false and fraudulent claim for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance benefits. The Indictment alleged that NELSON had caused another individual to file a fraudulent application for disaster relief benefits in NELSON's name, falsely claiming that NELSON had been living in Metairie, Louisiana, at the time of the storm and that NELSON had suffered storm-related damage in Metairie.

NELSON was sentenced yesterday by Senior U.S. District Court Judge John V. Parker to a term of imprisonment of twelve (12) months and \$4,358 in restitution to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). NELSON was also ordered to serve three years of supervised release following his release from incarceration. The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General.

The number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds stands at one hundred forty-three.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force – chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys and others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443. Anyone suspecting criminal activity involving disaster assistance programs can make an anonymous report by calling the toll-free Hurricane Relief Fraud Hotline, 1-866-720-5721, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until further notice. Information can also be emailed to the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force at HKFTF@leo.gov or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909.

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